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Department of Planning & Zoning**

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STAFF REPORT 2005-2006 AREA PLANS REVIEW

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): Braddock **APR ITEM(S):** 05-III-8P; 05-III-10P & 05-III-12P

NOMINATOR(S): Sharon Bulova, Braddock District Supervisor

ACREAGE: APR 05-III-8P & APR 05-III-10P: 2.7 Acres; 05-III-12P: NA

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: APR 05-III-8P & APR 05-III-10P: 77-2 ((1)) 35

GENERAL LOCATION: APR 05-III-8P: South of Guinea Road and north of Southern Railroad tracks; APR 05-III-10P: Abandoned Guinea Road and the adjoining parcel to the South between New Guinea Rd and north of Southern Railroad tracks; APR 05-III-12P: Burke Centre VRE Station and its vicinity.

PLANNING AREA(S): III

District(s): Pohick

Sector: Main Branch (P2), Middle Run (P6)

Special Area(s): NA

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: 05-III-8P & 05-III-10P: Public Facilities
05-III-12P: VRE Station is planned for Public Facilities.

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: 05-III-8P: Industrial up to .25 FAR. Also appropriate for Public Park or Public Open Space; 05-III-10P and 05-III-12P: No specific Plan text.

For complete Plan text see

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/planareas.htm>

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area3/pohick.pdf>

Pg 29, Land Use Recommendation 6; Pg 70, Public Facilities.

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: APR 05-III-8P: Add Plan text indicating that the subject property is used for wetlands mitigation and that trails and a pedestrian bridge should connect area to the VRE station. APR 05-III-10P: Proposes Kiss and Ride and a trail with pedestrian bridge connecting to the Burke VRE station. APR 05-III-12P: Add Plan text indicating that pedestrian trails should be provided to connect the Burke Centre VRE station to the surrounding communities.

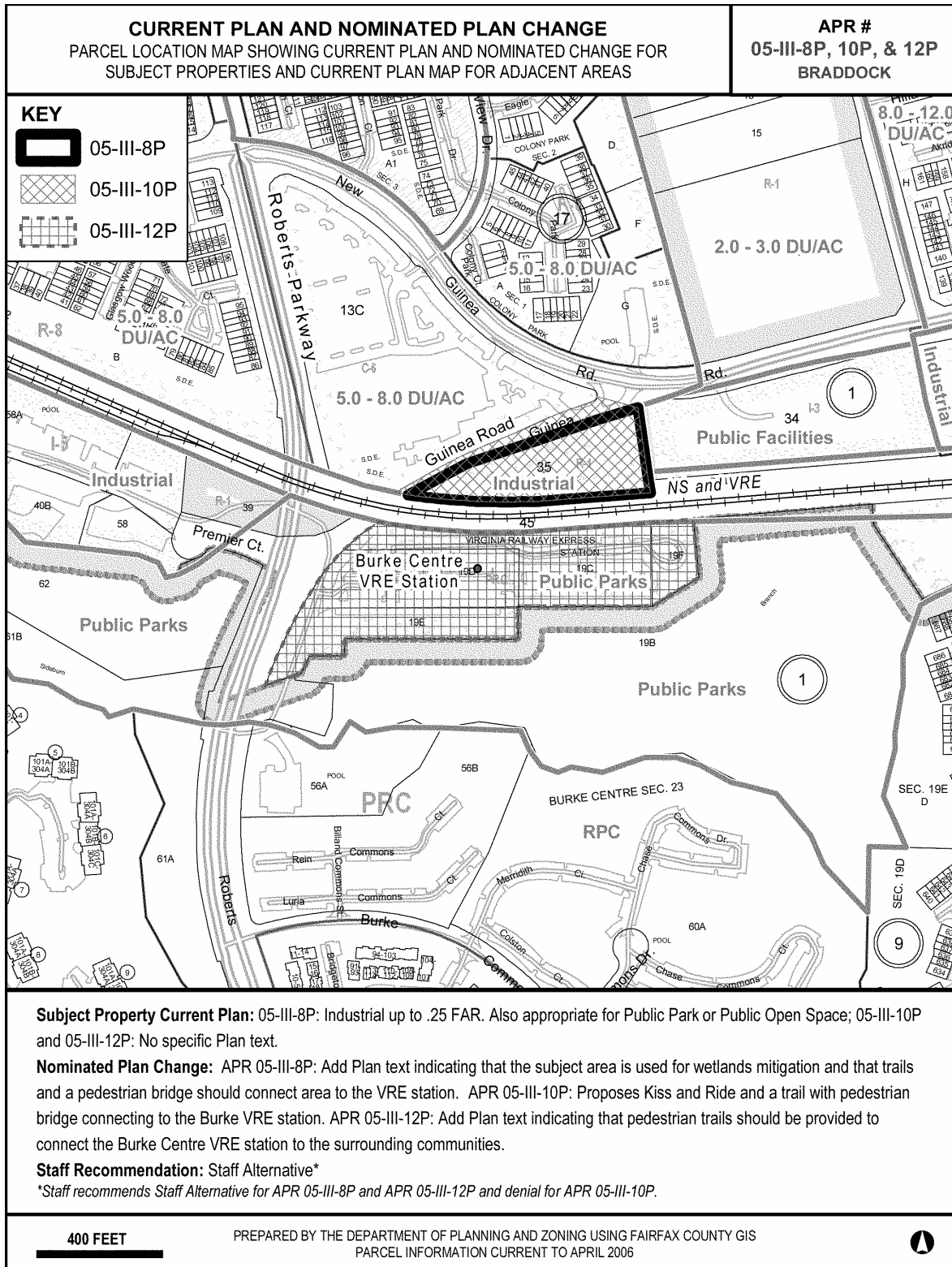
SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

_____ Approve Nomination as submitted

☒ Approve Staff Alternative*

_____ Retain Adopted Plan

**Staff recommends Staff Alternative for APR 05-III-8P and APR 05-III-12P and denial for APR 05-III-10P.*



CONTEXT

General Location: The general area in the vicinity of the Burke Centre VRE station is common to all the three nominations. APR 05-III-8P and APR 05-III-10P refer to a specific parcel south of Guinea Road and north of Southern Railroad tracks. APR 05-III-10P, in addition, refers to the abandoned Guinea Road. APR 05-III-12P generally refers to the area in the vicinity of Burke Centre VRE Station.

Planned and Existing Land Use and Zoning:

Subject Property: Parcel 77-2 ((1)) 35 which is common to APR 05-III-8P and APR 05-III-10P is planned for industrial uses up to 0.25 FAR, zoned R-1 and is currently used for wetlands mitigation. The Burke Centre VRE station is planned and developed as a commuter rail station and commuter parking lot. The station is zoned Planned Residential Community (PRC) and is part of the Burke Centre Residential Planned Community (RPC). The area in the vicinity of the Burke Centre VRE station is predominantly planned and developed with residential uses with a few exceptions.

Adjacent Area:

North: The area to the north of parcel 77-2 ((1)) 35 which is the subject area of APR 05-III-8P and APR 05-III-10P, is predominately planned for residential use at 5-8 du/ac, zoned R-8 and developed with townhouses. The exceptions are parcel 77-2((1))13C which is planned for residential use at 5-8 du/ac, zoned C-6 and currently developed with retail use.

West: The area to the west of the VRE station across Roberts Road is planned and developed with industrial uses and is zoned I-5.

South/East: The area immediately to the south and east of the VRE station is planned for Public Parks, is part of Burke Centre Residential Planned Community (RPC) and is zoned Planned Residential Community (PRC).

PLANNING HISTORY

No Comprehensive Plan changes were proposed for this area since 1997.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Following is the current Plan text for parcel 77-2((1)) 35 which is the subject property of APR 05-III-8P and is part of APR 05-III-10P.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District as amended through 12-6-2004, Main Branch Community Planning Sector(P2), Land Use Recommendation 6, Page 29:

“6. Parcel 77-2((1))35 is planned for light industrial use up to .25 FAR. It is also appropriate for public park or public open space use. Any additional industrial development in this area should be designed to minimize visual impacts on nearby residential uses and substantial screening, buffering, and barriers should be provided.”

The adopted Comprehensive Plan Map indicates that parcel 77-2((1))35 is planned for Industrial Use.

Pedestrian connectivity to the Burke Centre VRE Station from the surrounding communities is addressed by APR 05-III-10P and APR 05-III-12P. Both the nominations propose a pedestrian bridge over the Southern Railroad tracks. While there is no current Plan text on the pedestrian connectivity to the VRE station, there is Plan text referring to the parking spaces at the station as indicated below.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District as amended through 12-6-2004, Middle Run Community Planning Sector(P6), Public Facilities Recommendation 1, Page 70:

“1. Expand the Burke Centre Commuter Rail Station parking area by approximately 150 additional parking spaces.”

The adopted Comprehensive Plan Map indicates that the Burke Centre VRE station is planned for a commuter rail station and a commuter parking lot. The Comprehensive Plan Figure 36 on Page 76, Middle Run Community Planning Sector (P6) indicates that the commuter parking lot is planned for about 800 parking spaces.

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

APR 05-III-8P proposes amending the Plan text to recognize that parcel 77-2((1))35 is owned by Common Wealth of Virginia and that it has been set aside for wetlands mitigation. In addition, the nomination also proposes adding Plan text indicating that any development on this parcel such as trails or a pedestrian bridge should be designed to minimize visual impacts on nearby residential uses and that screening, buffering, and barriers should be provided. The nominated text is as follows:

“Parcel 77-2((1))35 is owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia and has been set aside as for wetlands mitigation. Any development, such as the constructing of trails or a pedestrian overpass should be designed to minimize visual impacts on nearby residential uses and screening, buffering and barriers should be provided.”

APR 05-III-10P proposes a kiss and ride facility on the abandoned portion of the Guinea Road. The proposed Plan text, as submitted, also suggests that a pedestrian trail could traverse parcel 77-2((1))35 (which is the subject property of APR 05-III-8P) and connect to a pedestrian bridge crossing the railroad tracks. At the Braddock APR Task Force meeting on February 7, 2006, the nominator proposed alternative Plan text, which deleted specific reference to parcel 77-2((1))35, and reads as follows:

“The abandoned Guinea Rd, South of the Target store and North of the tracks should be planned for a Kiss and Ride with Handicapped Parking and a Pedestrian Bridge that will connect the Kiss and Ride to the Parking garage. There should be a path/trail designed to traverse the land, from the Kiss and Ride area to a pedestrian bridge crossing the tracks to the North side of the Parking Garage with minimum impact.”

APR 05-III-12P proposes Plan text encouraging pedestrian connectivity to the Burke Centre VRE station from the surrounding areas. The proposed Plan text, as submitted with the nomination, proposes amending the Public Facilities recommendation 1 in the Middle Run (P6) planning sector to read:

“Connect the Burke Centre Commuter Rail Station to surrounding residential neighborhoods for pedestrian and non-motorized access to the station.”

The nomination also proposes adding the following Plan text to the Trails Section in the Middle Run (P6) planning sector indicating that priority should be given to the construction of trails that connect the existing trail networks to the Burke Centre VRE station. The nomination identifies two proposed trails south of the Burke Centre VRE station that connect Walnut Woods Lane and Chase Common Circle to the exiting Burke Centre trails.

“Priority should be assigned to constructing trails that connect the Burke Centre Commuter Rail Station to existing trail networks in the area to facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized access to the station.”

ANALYSIS

APR 05-III-8P: The subject property is owned by Common Wealth of Virginia and has been set aside for wetlands mitigation. The nomination proposes to add Plan text recognizing this current use of the property as open space. In addition, the Plan Map, which shows this property as planned for industrial use, should be updated to reflect the existing use by changing the property’s Plan Map designation to “Public Parks” which includes Public Open Space.

The nomination also proposes adding Plan text concerning the provision of trails and a pedestrian bridge which connects the surrounding area to the VRE station and provides additional guidance that these facilities should be designed in a manner minimizing visual impacts on nearby residential uses by providing screening, buffering, and barriers. The proposed

Plan text is too specific about the pedestrian connections, especially when it is not clear how a pedestrian connection could traverse the subject property without impacting the property's current wetland mitigation use. However, the nomination's objective of providing pedestrian access from the north to the VRE is desirable and should be addressed in a more general manner.

APR 05-III-10P: The subject area is the abandoned portion of the Guinea Road and is bounded by a retail store to the north and a vacant parcel owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia, set aside for wetlands mitigation, to the south. The nomination proposes a kiss and ride facility on the abandoned portion of the Guinea Road and a pedestrian trail through the wetlands mitigation site and a pedestrian bridge connecting the kiss and ride facility to the VRE parking garage.

The abandoned portion of the Guinea Road is too narrow to allow efficient and safe turning movements. A kiss and ride facility at this location may not be feasible. The issue of the pedestrian connectivity to the VRE station is analyzed with the pedestrian connections proposed by APR#05-III-12P.

APR 05-III-12P: The nomination proposes Plan text encouraging pedestrian connectivity to the Burke Centre VRE station from the surrounding areas. The nominated text as submitted addressed pedestrian connectivity to the VRE station from the area north and south of the station. During the course of Braddock APR Task Force meetings, it was clarified that the intent of the nomination is providing pedestrian connectivity to all the surrounding areas.

Design for the Burke Centre VRE station garage project is underway. No offsite pedestrian improvements are included in the garage project. However, some separate funding has been obtained, and more funds are being pursued for pedestrian improvements at the Burke Centre Parkway/Roberts Parkway intersection and for the two trails from the south. Pedestrian access from the north is more circuitous and difficult to provide. During public meetings on the parking garage project, citizens expressed a strong desire for a bridge to the north across the tracks. Due to budget constraints for the garage, a bridge option could not be pursued as part of that project. However, a commitment was made to try to explore access to the north further. The garage has been designed structurally to allow a future pedestrian bridge connection from the north side, near the station platform.

Location and design of the proposed pedestrian connection would require a feasible study that would investigate, among other issues, engineering details and environmental impacts, including wetland impacts.

RECOMMENDATION

APR 05-III-8P

Staff's recommendation is to support the proposed Plan text with modifications. Staff recommends updating the comprehensive Plan Map to change the Plan Map designation from

“Industrial” to “Public Parks” which includes Public Open Space. Staff also suggests drafting Plan text that provides general guidance for improving pedestrian access to the VRE. Staff further suggests replacing the proposed screening and buffering text with text indicating that the pedestrian connections should be designed with environmental sensitivity.

APR 05-III-10P

Staff is not supportive of kiss and ride facility on the abandoned portion of the Guinea Road as there is a concern that the abandoned portion of the Guinea Road is too narrow to allow efficient and safe turning movements. However, Staff is generally supportive of the pedestrian connectivity to the VRE and that the Plan text recommends alternative Plan text that makes a general reference to the improved pedestrian connectivity to the station. See Staff’s alternative Plan text for 05-III-12P

APR 05-III-12P

Staff is generally supportive of the pedestrian connectivity to the Burke Centre VRE. As mentioned under the above section, a feasibility study would be required to determine the exact location and construction details of the pedestrian connections. However, in terms of Plan text, Staff suggests alternative Plan text providing general guidance for pedestrian connection the surrounding areas. Staff also recommends updating the Figure 36 on page 73, Middle Run Community Planning Sector (P6), to indicate that the total number of parking spaces is approximately 1500.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(Additions are shown underlined; deletions are shown with a ~~striketrough~~):

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District as amended through 12-6-2004, Main Branch Community Planning Sector (P2), Land Use Recommendation 6, Pg 29:

“6. Parcel 77-2((1))35 is planned for public open space and is used for wetlands mitigation ~~light industrial use up to .25 FAR. It is also appropriate for public park or public open space use. Any additional industrial development in this area should be designed to minimize visual impacts on nearby residential uses and substantial screening, buffering, and barriers should be provided. A trail linking the area to the north to the Burke Centre VRE may be appropriate if the site’s environmental features are not adversely impacted.~~”

MODIFY: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District as amended through 12-6-2004, Middle Run Community Planning Sector (P6), Public Facilities Recommendation 1, Pg 70:

“1. ~~Expand~~ The Burke Centre Commuter Rail Station parking area ~~by~~ is planned for approximately ~~1500~~ 150 additional parking spaces. This facility should have improved pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding communities to the north, west, east and south. These trails should link to the existing and planned local and County Trail networks, which will encourage pedestrian access to the station and would reduce the need for additional parking.”

PLAN FIGURES

MODIFY

FIGURE: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Area III, Pohick Planning District as amended through 12-6-2004, Middle Run Community Planning Sector (P6), Transit Facility Recommendations Figure, page 73: Modify Figure 36 to indicate that the total number of parking spaces is approximately 1500.

THE PLAN MAP

Amend the Comprehensive Plan Map to change the Plan Map designation for parcel 77-2 ((1)) 35 from “Industrial” to “Public Parks” which includes Public Open Space.